

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SY-05 MCT-01 SCS-06 CA-01 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06
CCO-00 AID-05 IO-13 HA-05 /109 W
-----116404 221743Z /45

R 201000Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8951
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2449

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, BG
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE CLOSES DACCA UNIVERSITY

1. DACCA UNIVERSITY WAS CLOSED YESTERDAY EVENING
(APRIL 19) AFTER SPORADIC BUT VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN
VARIOUS STUDENT FACTIONS LED TO THE INJURY OF AT
LEAST 14 STUDENTS, TWO REPORTEDLY IN CRITICAL
CONDITION. IN YESTER'S DISTURBANCES AT LEAST TWO
STUDENTS WERE SHOT AT AND SEVERAL GROUPS WERE ATTACKED
WITH STICKS AND KNIVES APPARENTLY BY MARAUDING BANDS OF
YOUNG MEN, SOME OF WHOM MAY NOT HAVE BEEN STUDENTS.
DACCA METROPOLITAN POLICE MOVED ONTO THE CAMPUS IN THE
MORNING BUT REPORTEDLY STOOD BY SILENTLY DURING THE
EARLY TROUBLE. LATER, THE POLICE CORDONED OFF THE CENTRAL AREA
OF THE UNIVERSITY AND MADE SEVERAL ARRESTS. THE UNI-
VERSITY WAS ORDERED CLOSED AND ALL HOSTELS WERE VACATED
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BY 10 P.M. THIS MORNING, SEVERAL HUNDRED ANSARS (ARMED
RESERVE POLICE) IN BATTLE GEAR HAD JOINED POLICE IN
PATROLLING THE CAMPUS, WHICH WAS OTHERWISE DESERTED.

2. THE TROUBLE STEMMED ORIGINALLY FROM THE APRIL 13
EXPULSION OF THREE FEMALE STUDENTS WHO ALLEGEDLY HAD
BEEN INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES WITH SEVERAL EMPLOYEES OF

A DOMITORY HOSTEL. THE PRECISE CHARGES HAD NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC BY UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS. STUDENTS SUPPORTERS AND DETRACTORS OF THE THREE EXPELLED STUDENTS, REPUTEDLY MEMBERS OF THE CHATTRA UNION, CLASHED FIRST ON APRIL 13, INJURING SEVERAL FEMALE STUDENTS. (THE CHATTRA UNION IS A SMALL STUDENT FRONT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BANGLADESH, ITSELF BANNED IN OCTOBER FOLLOWING THE MUTINY). IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE APRIL 13 EXPULSION, THE CONTROVERSY HAD BOILED DOWN TO A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE BAKSAL FACTION OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE STUDENT FRONT, THE CHATTRA LEAGUE, AND PRIMARILY THE JSD STUDENT FRONT SUPPORTERS.

3. YESTERDAY'S VIOLENCE ERUPTED PARTLY AS STUDENTS GREW FRUSTRATED OVER THE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS WHO APPARENTLY HAD MADE LITTLE MOVE TO INVESTIGATE THE ORIGINAL ISSUE, BUT ALSO PARTLY AS TEMPERS HAD RISEN BETWEEN THE TWO RIVAL STUDENT FACTIONS. THE CONTROVERSY ALSO ENCOURAGED VARIOUS OTHER STUDENT GROUPS TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION. REPRESENTATIVES FROM FIVE FRONTS HELD AN IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LATE YESTERDAY EVENING AND CONDEMNED THE AWAMI LEAGUE'S STUDENT FRONT, THE CHATTRA LEAGUE, FOR USING "BAKSALITE GANSTERS" TO EXACERBATE THE TROUBLE. THE POLICE WERE ALSO CRITICIZED FOR FAILING TO HALT THE CONFLICT, AND THE UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS WERE CASTIGATED FOR NOT INVESTIGATING PROPERLY THE ORIGNAL TROUBLE.
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4. THE UNIVERSITY, WHICH HAD BEEN IN THE MIDST OF HONORS EXAMINATIONS, AND WOULD HAVE CLOSED THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY, WILL REMAIN CLOSED INDEFINITELY FOR SUMMER VACATION. THE MASS OF THE STUDENT BODY HAS VACATED THE CAMPUS, BUT THE FIREBRANDS REMAIN IN THE AREA. MORE TROUBLE MAY OCCUR, PARTICULARLY IF THE STUDENTS HOSPITALIZED IN CRITICAL CONDITION DIE. THE STUDENT TROUBLE ALSO COULD BE AN IRRITANT FOR PRESIDENT ZIA JUST AS HE IS REPORTEDLY READY TO ALLOW OPEN (AS CONTRASTED WITH THE PRESENT "PARLOUR" OR INDOOR) POLITICS IN PREPARATION FOR A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.
SCHNEIDER

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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NNN

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